

BIG BILL MASON, SLAYER OF TEN, READY TO SQUEAL

Man With Longest and Blackest Record Now In Sing Sing Cell About Ready To Shed Light On Long List of Crimes That Have Puzzled Police for Years.

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EVERY now and then word filters through the gray stone walls and steel bars of Sing Sing Prison that Big Bill Mason is about to squeal. Nothing stirs this department more than this ominous rumor for, perhaps, should Bill unseal his lips and tell us all he knows many a crime, in which murder was done might be solved and light shed on others that long since were shelved as unsolved mysteries. Big Bill was one of the worst that ever operated in the East and a human life meant no more to him than the ash he flicked from his cigar. He has been dubbed the "Human Hyena" by the New York police and no appellation in my opinion could be more fitting.

Born on the outskirts of St. Louis, and christened Benjamin Shaffer, this youngster manifested all the vicious traits of an outlaw long before he discarded his knickerbockers. As William Lynch he became known to the police of the Middle West and he constantly was in trouble. A giant in stature he was the terror of his neighborhood and when he let his powerful fists fly he always struck to kill. As a bar room fighter he had few equals and such a thing as seeing two ordinary sized men by the scruff of their necks, cracking their heads together and dropping them insensate at his feet was but child's play.

Body Full of Scars. Train wrecking and robbing the bodies of the victims following these crashes, formed a favorite amusement for Big Bill and after engaging in this sport on the Pacific Coast he came East, his scarred body clearly proving that he had not always gone scot free from the bullets of the various posses that pursued him. It is presumed that the young bandit concluded that housebreaking in the larger cities of the East was a far safer and more remunerative vocation than that of battling with Western posses, so he worked his way East and New York in this way came to know the young giant who sometimes called himself Mason, but more often Lynch.

There is not a detective in the East who is not familiar with the details surrounding the brutal murders of Major Wilson, the venerable Philadelphia librarian; the shooting of Judge Blodgett, of Schenectady, N. Y., where he was chief counsel of the general Electric Company, and the slaying of William O. Hutchins, the wealthy Providence, R. I. Jeweler, all of which crimes they lay at the door of Big Bill Mason. Neither time nor space permit me to dwell at length on his earlier crimes, so I will confine myself to those which we deem the

cruelest in Big Bill's repertoire. I will take up the case of Judge Blodgett first. Early one morning Judge Blodgett was awakened from a sound slumber by his terrified wife who whispered: "There's a burglar in the room!" As Blodgett attempted to arise from his bed a powerful form leaped over him and coolly said: "If you as much as move a hand I'll blow the top of your head off!" Whether Blodgett failed to heed the warning will never be known, for the next instant he fell back upon his pillow—a bullet having pierced his body. The screams of the wife had no effect upon Bill, for after warning her to remain quiet he struck her a stunning blow over the head with the butt of his revolver and she fell back insensible across the inanimate body of her husband. Then Bill, sure that he would not be interrupted, descended to the dining room where he leisurely packed the choicest of the family silver into a bag and decamped.

Bill Escapes A Trap. A few days after this murder a second dealer in jewelry and silverware, of Philadelphia, who knew Big Bill well was approached by Mason and asked if he was in the market for a "bunch of junk." Each piece of the Blodgett silver was engraved with the monogram of the slain man's wife and this made it easy of identification. Bill explained that this was a handicap, for in the event of its purchase it would have to be melted at once. The jeweler said he didn't care to buy a pig in the poke so he would have to look the silver over before deciding, and an appointment was made when Bill should bring the loot to the store. But somehow Bill's suspicions were aroused and he failed to keep the appointment.

After reading of the Schenectady murder and robbery, accompanied by a full description of the stolen silver this jeweler at once arrived at the conclusion that the loot Big Bill had offered him was from the Blodgett home, so he at once got in touch with the police. The Philadelphia police conferred with the Detective Bureau in New York City and all agreed that Judge Blodgett had been slain by Big Bill Mason, so a general alarm was sent out for his arrest.

The Philadelphia police were startled one night to learn that Fred May, cashier for a pool room in Market Street had been blackjacked and robbed. It was a strong arm job and the victim was left weltering in his blood. May, who carried the bank roll for the day's play, about \$5,000, had entered a dark alley intending to



With The Muzzle Of The Gun Pressed To The Detective's Head He Pulled The Trigger.

approach the pool room from the rear. Someone had laid in wait for him, struck him a stunning blow over the head with a piece of lead pipe, and then leisurely lifted the bank roll, a diamond ring worth \$1,000, a diamond stud and a gold watch and chain and a gem studded locket of great value. These the assailant appropriated and decamped. Big Bill Mason had been seen lurking in the vicinity a half hour before the attack and the police were confident he was its author. Another damning bit of evidence was the fact that a young man known to the police as John D. Frye, who had been arrested and convicted at Terra Haute for the same crime in which Mason had a part, was at that time an employee in the pool room which May ran. The supposition was that he had framed the job and Mason put it over. All this evidence, as strong as it was, was purely circumstantial and Big Bill was not tried for this job.

Beats Librarian To Death. Seemingly Philadelphia was so easy

for Big Bill that he could not resist its lure. One year after the May hold up Major W. C. Wilson, proprietor of a circulating library in Walnut Street, was slain in his place of business. The aged man was very popular and his murder struck terror to the hearts of the hundreds who knew and loved him. The cry for vengeance spread through the city like a prairie fire and the police were stirred as never before.

The mangled body of the aged man was found lying in the center of the library floor and an old and decrepit as he was all evidence pointed to the terrible struggle that must have preceded the death blow. The body was scarred and bruised and beaten literally to a pulp. Every penny in the place had been taken as well as valuables of rare worth. Even the poor box had been looted, so greedy had the slayer been. Stained finger marks on the door were the lone clue the detectives had to work on and with this in their possession the work of

rounding up Big Bill was started. But somehow he bore a charmed life and managed to keep out of their grip for a long time. He had been seen in Philadelphia the night before the crime and that was another link in the chain, and in the minds of the police a very strong one.

A negro porter in the employ of the librarian was suspected for a time and the case against him even went to trial, but it was thrown out of court on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

Bill was an adept in the art of hiding himself. It was just six months after the murder of Major Wilson that word reached Philadelphia police headquarters that Bill had been seen that night in Camden, N. J., a little city just across the Delaware River from Philadelphia. Two private detectives had been shadowing Bill, but knowing his prowess as a stranger, a gun fighter and all around "strong arm guy" they feared to close in on him until they had reinforcements at hand. Therefore they telephoned to

the Philadelphia police and asked for assistance which was readily detailed.

Almost Caught. The detectives had trailed Big Bill to a saloon in Camden where he joined a hard and desperate lot of hangers on. A lively drinking bout was in progress and Big Bill was the life of the party. But Big Bill had noticed two strangers who sat apart from the rest and he didn't exactly like the looks of them. They might be bulls, or they might not, but in any event he wasn't in a position just then to take any chances.

Mason invariably made it a practice to frequently take a back door and he always came and went by this route. Front doors were too easily watched and whenever he found a crib that could be reached through a dark alley that place at once became popular with Bill and his mob. Such was the case in this Camden saloon. Becoming uneasy in the presence of the two strangers, Bill arose and made his way to the rear yard. The detectives bellowing that he was "on" and intended to make a getaway followed. As they reached the yard the detective saw Bill wheel in his tracks and attempt to draw a gun from his rear pocket. These bulls were no amateurs and with a spring one of them leaped upon Bill and as the gun of the slayer's pistol had hung in the lining of his pistol pocket he was caught momentarily off guard. The butt of the detective's revolver crashed on Big Bill's head and for a second he was stunned.

With a roar of pain Bill went at his adversaries and for a time a life and death struggle followed. The detectives were both strong and were getting the best of the battle when those in the saloon, alarmed by the uproar in the yard, came running to the scene and seeing that "Big Bill" was in trouble they set upon the detectives and brutally beat them while Bill leaped a fence and disappeared in the darkness.

It was sometime before the detectives could give chase and when they did they were unable to pick up the slayer's trail. When the two headquarters men from Philadelphia arrived the trail was cold and no trace of Bill could be found. One important clue was picked up, however, by the Philadelphia bulls as soon as they arrived. In the struggle with the private detectives Big Bill's pistol had been wrenched from his grasp and left in their possession. The pistol was of peculiar design and the bullet it fired especially made for it. These bullets tallied in every detail with those that had been fired into the body of Judge Blodgett.

The New York police later learned that Big Bill and his cronies, James Coffey, had gone west immediately after the Camden encounter. Coffey could not stay away from his beloved haunts in the Bowery, however, and he turned up a few months later. The police decided it would be well to cover Coffey, for in that way some

trace of Mason might be found. Coffey opened a saloon in Cherry Street and this the detectives closely watched. One night Coffey and Frank, alias "Red" Spencer, left the saloon of the former and made their way to the West Shore ferry to the foot of Forty-second Street. Detectives Fogarty and Stripp trailed them. At the ferry they were met by Big Bill Mason and Thomas Riley, the latter a desperate second story man with a long record. The two detectives saw at once that with these four crooks, each with a reputation as a bull dog when it came to fight, that their night's work was cut out for them. Reinforcements were necessary if they were to round up this mob and here was an opportunity that could not be overlooked. Two plain clothes policemen were pressed into service and told to be on the lookout for trouble. "If you see any one of this mob reach for his gun," said Fogarty, "let him have yours before he can make another move. And shoot to kill, this is the worst bunch in New York."

Big Bill Beaten At Last. Big Bill and his three companions had sized up the detectives and they worked their way over to a corner of the ferry house where they conversed in low tones. As the detectives approached them Big Bill sensed trouble and quickly flashed his gun. As he did so Fogarty leaped for his throat and fastening one hand to Bill's collar with the other he struggled for possession of the slayer's pistol. Here Mason's great strength asserted itself.

Freeing the detective's clutch on his throat Big Bill lifted Fogarty clear of the ground. Then pressing the muzzle of his pistol to the detective's head he tried to snap the trigger. Whether it was an accident or a miracle, but certainly more like the latter, the hammer of the pistol, as it fell, struck on Big Bill's thumb and with a low of pain he dropped the gun.

Fogarty had gotten his wits by this time and was raining blow after blow on Mason's head. Slowly but surely he wore the big brute down and won one final and crushing blow on Big Bill's head the bandit sank to the floor bleeding and completely whipped. Meanwhile each of the other policemen had singled out one of Bill's pals and after a sharp but desperate battle the entire mob was beaten down and arrested.

Mason was taken back to Philadelphia, but Indiana authorities had a prior claim upon him and again Bill went back to the prison in Michigan. City and rounded out a term. But his soon came into possession of the New York authorities again and was safely lodged in Sing Sing. Recently he is estimated he might talk if he could make terms. You can rest assured as terms will be agreed to for we already have enough evidence to put him away for life, but one thing is certain anything Bill might have to say is of absorbing interest and we will be tentative listeners.

Glacier Climbing in the Selkirks and Canadian Rockies



Mt. Victoria and Lake Louise from the Bed Room Window of the Writer

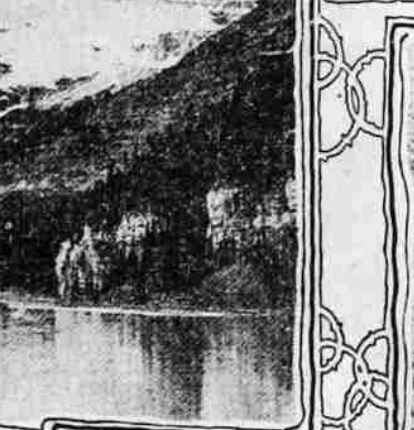
The Formation and Beauty of the Great Ice Rivers of Western Canada—How They Are Conquered By the Climber.

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HERE is a fascination about mountain climbing that danger whets rather than dispels and no task is too difficult for the mountaineer to undertake; to scale lofty, rugged, ice-clad cliffs is his greatest joy, and the treacherous glacier invites and encourages his spirit of adventure. While nature has given to the Rockies and the Sierras of the United States stupendous mountains, noble peaks and picturesque canyons surpassing in hugeness and height the elevation beyond the Canadian border, yet the Selkirks and Canadian Rockies are more abrupt and rugged, presenting vast areas of glaciers and affording to the lover of mountain climbing a better field for the display of his prowess and skill. These mountains are growing in popularity, and every year adds to the number who go there to conquer some lofty peak or to cross some mighty glacier.

Formation of A Glacier.

In plain terms, a glacier is a river of ice draining a rock basin above filled to overflowing with ice and snow and technically known as neve, but popularly called a snow field. In these high regions the heavy precipitation is always in the form of snow which keeps the great rock basins full to overflowing. The prodigious weight of the mass compacts the under snows



Ice Cave in the Illecillewaet Glacier

into crystal ice. This overflow, pushed slowly down the mountain by the enormous pressure from above, constitutes the glacier. Its upper part is covered with snow, and its lower part where the warmer air melts the surface snow is exposed ice. This is the "ice fall," and in contrast to the snow covered part is called a "dry glacier." Heat and cold, contraction and expansion, and the unevenness of the bed over which it moves downward causes large cracks to occur across the ice river. They are of all sizes and are called crevasses. Sometimes they cross each other and the result is that when the pressure from above closes the cracks great ice pillars of fantastic shapes, called seracs, are formed.

These great masses of ice stretch over vast areas, for instance, the Illecillewaet snow field is about ten square miles, while the Columbia snow field is roughly estimated to cover over two hundred square miles at an altitude of ten thousand feet. Any number of hanging glaciers are to be found in the Selkirk range, one of the few places in which they exist. Along the heads of the high valleys they are

found lining the sides and are strikingly beautiful in the labyrinthine structure of their crevassed surfaces which from a distance resemble a creamy film of lace work enshrouding bare rock.

Canadian Alpine Club.

Up to 1888 there were no climbers in Canada who climbed for pleasure. Of course, there was the engineer corps and the topographical survey of the Canadian Government, but this was work, not play. Today, however, mountain climbing in these splendid ranges has become a genuine sport and a part of the summer vacation of many Canadians. This was brought about through the organization of what is known as the Alpine Club of Canada. Each year the members go into camp and some new snow-capped giant is conquered. Only those who have climbed over glaciers to the summit of a perpetual snow-capped mountain are eligible. The Club at present has a membership of about seven hundred, many of whom are women who are glacier climbing experts. While all glaciers are beautiful, the rugged formation of the Illecillewaet with its huge crevasses, its

On the Snow Field of Mt. LeRoy

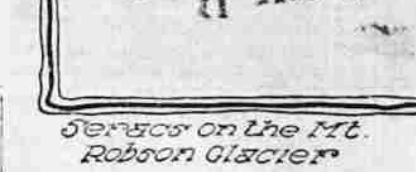
giant seracs and its moraine of boulders is perhaps the most picturesque. Unfortunately, it is rapidly receding and climbing on parts of it is a dangerous sport owing to the "rotten" ice. Its snow field, which must be crossed to reach Sir Donald, the highest peak of the range, spreads over many crevasses and it is unsafe to go over it unless accompanied by one of the Swiss guides.

Illecillewaet Ice Cave.

The writer in climbing over the Illecillewaet glacier came across an ice cave with a waterfall in the rear. At this point the glacier was a delicate blue-green and transparent. The ice had formed itself into seats around the sides of the cave and one might sit in a cold chair and view the waterfall, a thin stream which dropped for fifteen or twenty feet. At another place there was a maze of crevasses sweeping outward from the centre. Many of them seemed bottomless, and the ice in their depths was a deep blue. Everywhere one heard the trickle of water, for streams were running beneath the glacier. In order to fully appreciate the magnificence of this big ice field it is necessary to study it under different aspects—in light, in shadow and with the sun sparkling on its many ice points, or when it is covered with fresh snow, or to follow its snow slopes to the sky line and then turn and gaze upon the dwarfed landscape below. From the crest of the snow field to the tongue of the glacier is a fall of about three thousand feet—a pretty stiff climb, but worth the exertion, for the seracs—great pinnacles of ice, are alone worth the trip.

Asulkan Glacier.

The Asulkan glacier is in the same vicinity, and is even more dangerous and difficult to climb. It presents several spectacular groups of seracs and



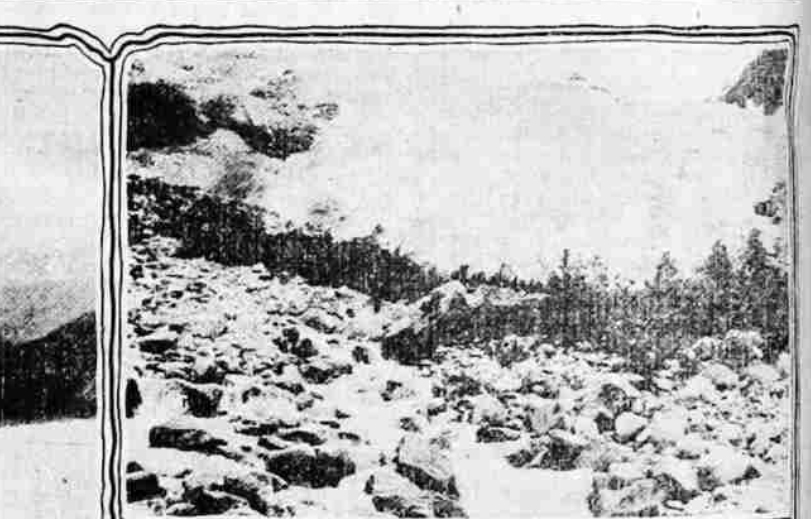
Seracs on the Mt. Robson Glacier

a number of fine crevasses of great depth and lined with pendant icicles. They resemble cavernous jaws set with sharp, cruel teeth, yet when the sun plays on their walls of green and blue they seem like some fairy cave filled with gems. Patches of red snow, so common in the Arctic regions, are frequently seen on the Asulkan snow field—a vegetable formation resembling a sea weed. It grows on the surface of the snow making a crimson stain and is the lowest form of plant life.

Any number of smaller glaciers exist in the Selkirks but the two mentioned are the most beautiful, although the Gorkie is regarded by many climbers as remarkable on account of its almost smooth surface. The Selkirks are separated from the Rockies by the low lying valley of the Columbia River, and are wholly different in structure and older geologically.

Mount Robson.

The highest peak of the Canadian Rockies is Mt. Robson with an altitude of thirteen thousand, five hundred feet. This mountain has a glacier gateway worthy of the most energetic mountain climber. Last year several members of the Alpine Club of Canada reached its summit and had some thrilling experiences on the snow fields. Of course, these people climb by aid of ropes, which is the only safe way to climb where snow and ice are encountered. The ice field presents the best seracs to be found on the glaciers of the Rockies. A number of snow cornices form every year and these are extremely dangerous to climbers. They are a sort of overhanging edge of snow at the crest of a peak or ridge caused by drifting;



The Tongue of the Great Illecillewaet Glacier



Ice Cornice near the Summit of Mt. Resplendent

Ice is formed by the snow thawing and freezing again. Should the climber step on one of these bad falls is sure to follow.

Victoria Glacier.

Mt. Victoria, near Lake Louise, is one of the favorite peaks of the Rockies. It is over eleven thousand feet in height and has a beautiful blue-white glacier on its slopes. This great ice field is said to be from two hundred to two hundred and fifty feet in thickness. In warm weather the thunder of avalanches is frequently heard at the Chaiet, for great masses of this ice break off and come thundering down the mountain. As distances in the mountains are very deceptive, it is no uncommon thing for tourists to start to walk to the Victoria glacier under the impression that it is a mile or two away, when in reality the tongue of the glacier is about five miles from the hotel. During the summer visitors are cautioned not to approach the Victoria glacier owing to the avalanches which generally bring a shower of rocks as well as ice. The glacier alone is three miles in length and must be crossed in order to gain the summit. Even after hanging glacier and cornices have been covered by snow the view is magnificent for countless peaks, lakes and the beautiful Paradise Valley come into view. Lake Louise like a huge

turquoise lies at the foot of the peak with Lake Agnes and Mirror Lake stuck into the sides of a nearby peak. Wild flowers are all about nestling even at the edges of the glaciers, and far in the distance Bow Valley with the Bow River like a ribbon of silver winding its way through the mountains can be seen. Altogether the view from Mt. Victoria is one of the grandest in North America.

Valley of The Ten Peaks. Up in the Valley of the Ten Peaks glaciers fairly run riot. The one known as the Venckhemma is the largest and rests against several of the peaks. A large part of it is buried under moraine debris, which makes climbing over it both easier and safer. Streams from these glaciers trickle down the mountains and keep the flowers in the valley fresh with their spray.

The snow field of Mt. Resplendent is unusually smooth and causes the climber little bother, but the final stages of the climb are usually tried on account of avalanches. In Paradise Valley, Yoho Valley and "Coca" Valley numbers of glaciers are to be found, their sides beautified by wind and storm. Scores of unnamed lakes dot these beautiful mountains of Western Canada, and many peaks are yet unnamed and unconquered.